A SERMON

Preach'd at the
Cathedral Church of *Worceſter*,
Upon the

Thankſgiving-Day,

April 16. 1696.

By *W. TALBOT*, D. D. and
Dean of *Worceſter*.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the Mayor and
Aldermen of that City.

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To the Right Worshipful *Nicholas Fayting*, Esq; Mayor, and the Worshipful the Aldermen of the City of *Worcester*.

Gentlemen,

THE general Joy and Thankfulness which have appear'd throughout the Kingdom, upon the discovery and defeat of the late Designs of France against Us, make me hope that the Eyes of this People, which some have been so busie to put out, by all the Dust they could raise, are at last clear'd; and that many well-meaning Persons, who have been misled by the Cunning of such as lie in wait to deceive, do now begin to see that, after all the pretenses of Honour on the other side the Water, and Conscience on this, the Question is come to this short Issue, Whether we will live like a Free People under our English Laws and Government which have been so bravely asserted by our Ancestors, and enjoy our Reform'd Religion, which has been seal'd with the Blood of Martyrs, of our Spiritual Fathers and Brethren in Christ, or, Exchange these for a French Servitude and Papal Bondage, and bring a Yoke upon our selves and Posterity, which neither we nor our Fathers have been able to bear?

This You and your Worthy Citizens were certainly sensible of, when upon the late Thanksgiving-Day for the Deliverance of His Majesty and these Kingdoms from the designed Assassination and Invasion You appear'd in such Numbers in the House of God, and expresst your respect to it in such Instances as have scarcely been parallell'd, upon any Occasion, in this place.

I heartily wiſh, That my Health and Leiſure would have permitted me to have made that part of the Solemnity that fell to my ſhare of a Piece with the others; and that when all the reſt deſerv'd to be ſet in as bright a Light as that with which You illuminated your Streets upon the Evening of that Joyful Day, it alſo might not have wanted a Veil to cover it.

But, however needful it may be, I am ſure I muſt not offer at any Apology for making it publick: None can be made on my part, but what may be anſwer'd in thoſe words of St. Peter *to* Ananias, While it remain'd with thee was it not thine own? *And as to You, Gentlemen, Now it is yours (tho' You may wiſh that I had made ſuch a return to your Commands as the Elder Brother did to thoſe of his Father in the Goſpel, who ſaid,* Sir, I go, and did not, *rather than with the ſecond, profeſt my unwillingneſs to comply, and afterwards repented and did it) You muſt be contented to account for it, to take it wholly upon your ſelves, and not expect that I ſhould ſay one word for it, for that would be unwarily to intitle my ſelf to its Defence, when I can ſo fairly rid my hands of it, and lay it at your Doors.*

If any of thoſe good Ends ſhall be ſerved by Printing it, which You ſpoke of when You honoured me with a Viſit the Day after it was Preach'd, I ſhall think it but reaſonable that the acknowledgments thereof ſhould be made only to You, who muſt bear all the ill Conſequences of it, as having commanded it from me by your Authority, which I do own is very great over,

Worceſter, Apr. 20. 1696.

Gentlemen,

Your moſt Obedient, and
Faithful Humble Servant,

W. F.

PSAL.

PSAL. CXXIV. 6, 7, 8.

Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth.

Our Soul is eſcaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler; the Snare is broken, and we are eſcaped.

Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.

The former Part of the Pſalm is thus:

If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, now may Iſrael *ſay:*

If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, when Men roſe up againſt us:

Then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us.

Then the Waters had overwhelmed us, the Stream had gone over our Soul.

Then the proud Waters had gone over our Souls.

Bleſſed, &c.

THE Title of this Pſalm ſhews the Author of it to be King *David*, and the occaſion of his compoſing it, was certainly ſome ſignal Deliverance either Perſonal or National, which God had beſtow'd upon himſelf or his People.

Whether

Whether it were his Deliverance from the ſeveral Deſigns and Attempts upon his Life, of his Father-in-Law King *Saul*, or from the Conſpiracy and Inſurrection of his Son *Abſalom*, or from the *Philiſtines* who came up to ſeek him upon their hearing that he was anointed King over *Iſrael* in *Hebron*, or from the *Ammonites* afterwards with their hired Succours, the *Syrians*, or whatever the particular Mercy was, that the Royal Prophet had an Eye to when he made this Euchariſtical Song, 'tis moſt admirably contrived and fitted for the Uſe of any Nation or People, profeſſing God's true Religion, upon any eminent Deliverance of themſelves, or their Prince, from the wicked Deſigns of the Enemies thereof.

I ſay of themſelves or their Prince: For *David* here makes this grateful Recognition of the Divine Goodneſs in the Name of *Iſrael*, as if his People had been in great danger, and very narrowly eſcaped; when yet, according to good Commentators, 'twas a perſonal Deliverance from a Deſign againſt himſelf that he here commemorates; and indeed not without Reaſon, for the Head and the Body-politick are very nearly related, what touches the one muſt affect the other, and if when one Member ſuffers another Member ſuffers with it, when the Head is hurt the whole Body muſt ſympathize with it: I ſpeak of ſuch a Head as has that tender Care for the Members which that relation calls for, that looks upon himſelf as exalted above them, only that he may the better watch over them, and more effectually provide for the Security and Common Good of the whole; that is a true Father of his Country, and treats his Subjects not as Slaves but Children; that is a *good Shepherd, and feeds his People according to the Integrity of his heart, and guides them by the Skilfulneſs of his hand*, as was ſaid of *David*, he does not defraud them of any thing that is their due, much leſs does he butcher and make havock of them; no, that is the Character of the Robber, who *climbs into the Sheepfold only to ſteal, and kill,*

kill, and destroy: The good Shepherd is as careful of the Lives of his Sheep as of his own; nay, so much more so, that when the Wolf comes he leaves not the Sheep, but exposes himself in their Defence; and rather than that Beast of Prey should catch, and scatter, and tear his Flock, he ventures his own Life for them, proving himself thereby to be no *Thief* or *Hireling*, but the *true Shepherd, whose own the Sheep are*: He leads them with Care and Tenderness, he feeds them with Prudence and Kindness, and fights for them with Zeal and Courage: Such a Prince as considers and endeavours to answer the End of the Institution of Government, the Good of Mankind, that is join'd with his Subjects in the same common Interests, both Civil and Religious, that has no base Designs of Ambition, Avarice, or Cruelty, no unworthy private Ends to serve, but thinks he then only consults his own Advantage when he promotes the Good of the whole, that is no Persecutor of his Subjects for their adherence to the true Religion, but professes the same Faith and joins in the same Communion with them: In short, that is a just Guardian of their Civil Rights and Liberties, and a zealous Defender of their Faith and Religion; such a one is so intimately united to his People, that he is in the Scripture Language *the Breath of their Nostrils*, and to Assassinate him is to Massacre a Kingdom; and therefore when *David was delivered from the hurtful Sword of his Enemies*, well might all *Israel say, Blessed be the Lord who has not given us over as a Prey to their Teeth.*

But whether this Psalm was at first made upon occasion of a personal Deliverance of the King of *Israel*, or not, is not certain; but this is, that it has been look'd upon, and used both by the Jewish and Christian Church as a proper Hymn of Praise to God for National Mercies and Deliverances.

Thus amongst the Jews, the Levites were appointed to sing it after their Return from their Captivity in *Babylon*; and

and thus our Church has order'd it to be ſung or ſaid for the Office for the Fifth of *November*, which we obſerve yearly in remembrance of our Deliverance from the Deſigns of our Enemies of *Babylon* Myſtical; and ſhe has appointed it likewiſe in the Evening Service for this Day, which we are commanded by Authority to obſerve as a Day of Publick Thankſgiving to Almighty God for our late wonderful Deliverance from the no leſs barbarous and bloody Deſigns of the ſame ſort of Enemies, the ſame I mean as to the Principles and Religion they profeſs; for I would fain hope that not many of any other Communion were engaged in, or privy to the blackeſt part of this villainous Conſpiracy, that few that call themſelves Proteſtants could join with Papiſts in their worſt Doctrines and Practices, or will ever rob that Church of her peculiar Honour and privilege of Aſſaſſinating Princes, of Conſecrating Daggers for their Murder, and Canonizing the villainous Hands that imploy'd them.

And how reaſonably this Pſalm makes all part of this Day's Service will appear,

I. By conſidering the two general Parts of it.

The former whereof gives an Account of a great Deliverance vouchſafed by God to *Iſrael*.

The latter contains the Returns which *Iſrael* made to God for it.

II. By taking a View of the occaſion of our preſent Meeting; and if our Deliverance be as great as that of *Iſrael's*, 'twill be but fit that we ſhould join with them in their Returns to God, and make the ſame Acknowledgments of it.

First,

First, Let us consider *Israel's* Deliverance. I have already said, 'tis uncertain what particular occurrance the Psalmist referrs to, and therefore shall only take notice of these general Accounts which we have in this Psalm of the Enemies that were conspiring against them, the Mischief they intended, the probability and nearness of their Success, with the happy defeat of them, and rescue of *Israel*, by the seasonable interposition of Divine Providence.

As for the Enemies that were conspiring against *Israel*, the 3d Verse tells us, they were such *whose Wrath was kindled against them*; they were, it should seem, highly incensed by some Provocations which they had received, which so heated them, their Blood boiled up within them, and nothing could allay the Ferment but the letting out that of *Israel's*; they were spurr'd on by Rage and Resentment, and violently bent to wreak their Fury and Malice upon them by all the Methods they could put in practice.

But Anger without Power hurts no body but the miserable Subject of it; but alas these Men's Power was equal to their Rage; they are represented, *V.* 4. by *Waters*, which may denote how numerous they were, a vast Conflux or mighty Collection of them; and at the end of that Verse, by *Streams or Torrents*, violent Interruptions, which bear down all before them; and at the 5th by *proud Waters*, or, as it is in the other Translation, *deep Waters of the proud*, so that there was no wading through them, nor standing against them, the Stream was so rapid and the Waters swoln so much above their depth.

The Mischief they intended against them, was no less than their utter ruine, they were for *overwhelming* or *swallowing them up*, as we may read in the 3d and 4th Verses, for making a full end of them, *rooting them out, that the Name of Israel might be had no more in remembrance*; and this not leisurely, or by degrees, but all of a sudden, they

would swallow them up *raw or quick*, either as some hungry Beast does his Prey, or as the Sea did *Pharaoh* and his Host, and to this end they *rose up against them*, *V.* 2. and to make sure work of it, added cunning to their strength, *V.* 7. they laid Snares or Grins for them, attempted them both by open Violence and Secret Treachery.

And so near were they to accomplish their Ends upon them, that they had as 'twere seized their Prey, and were possess'd of their Game, the rapacious Wolves had got the poor Lambs into their Clutches, and they had no power to resist or rescue themselves; they were like silly Birds taken in the Nets or Springs of the Fowler, they had neither strength to break them, nor Skill to extricate themselves out of them, the more they flutter'd the more they were entangled, the more they strove, the faster the Grin held them.

This briefly was *Israel's* Case, their Enemies were mighty, and raged horribly, they were unmoveably resolved upon their utter Destruction, they wanted neither Policy nor Power to effect it; they had proceeded so far, and were so near doing it, that no humane Means or Power could have prevented or opposed them.

But then God interposed, and then indeed the Scene was wonderfully chang'd. How sure soever their Enemies thought themselves in triumphing in their Overthrow and Extinction, yet the Advantage was plainly then on *Israel's* side; for it *was God that was on their side, and they were but Men that rose up against them*; and all the Cunning and Power of Men, when opposed to the Divine Wisdom and Strength, is but meer Folly and Weakness: He can make the Counsels of the Wise of none effect, and take the Crafty in their own Wiliness: He can baffle all the Attempts of the Mighty, and turn their own Forces upon themselves: And here he broke the *Jaw-bone of the Lions, and delivered the Prey out of their teeth; he broke the Snare of the Ungodly, and let the oppressed Captive go free.*

free. Great Reason therefore had *Israel* for such a miraculous Escape, to make those Acknowledgments and Returns to the Author of it, which we here see they did; namely,

1. To ascribe their Deliverance wholly to God, as the doing of that *right hand* only, *which bringeth mighty things to pass: If the Lord himself had not been on our side, we had been swallowed up quick, and the Stream had gone over our Souls.*

2. To give him the Praise due unto his Name for it: *Blessed be the Lord who has not given us over as a Prey to their Teeth.*

3. And Lastly, to declare their Confidence in him, and intire reliance upon his Power and Goodness for the time to come: *Our Help standeth in the Name of the Lord who hath made Heaven and Earth.* That God who manifested his Power and Goodness, by Creating the World out of Nothing by a Word of his Mouth, and giving Being to all the Creatures in it, has as evidently shewn forth those glorious Attributes in our strange Preservation and Rescue out of the Hands of our formidable and implacable Enemies; there will we therefore place our Confidence, not *fearing what Man can do unto us*: On God we will depend, *He only is our Rock and Salvation, our Defence and Refuge, through him we shall do valiantly, and he shall tread down our Enemies.*

This is that short Account of this Psalm, of *Israel*'s imminent Danger, their wonderful Deliverance from it, and grateful Behaviour thereupon.

I proceed now to take a View of our own Case: It will not, I suppose, be expected that I should go about to prove the Plot, That there has been a most Horrid and Hellish Design on-foot against the Life of our King, and the

Laws, and Religion of this Kingdom. After the voluntary Depositions of several that were to be concerned in it; and these confirm'd from abroad by the visible Preparations that were made on the *French* Coasts for a Descent upon us; a great number of their Forces drawn down thither, and Vessels ready to bring them over, when the Signal, an Account of the Dreadful Blow, should be given them; the mighty boast of their great Design and Confidence of Success, which were express'd in Letters from some of the first Quality in that Kingdom, and the Harangues of their Ministers at other Courts: This confirm'd also at home by the Confessions of those who have been Convicted and Executed here, who have all own'd the shares they were to have had in it upon their Deaths, and some gloried in it: While a Papist at his Execution looks back with regret upon the part he was to have acted in the bloody Tragedy, as a Crime he was led into by his own Rashness and Passion, as a Wickedness which he repents of, and for the punishment of which particularly he acknowledges he was brought to suffer Death, by the just Hand of God, our Protestant Conspirators, to the reproach (I hope not of our Holy Religion, which I am sure is far enough from countenancing such things, but of) their wretched Guides, boast of the Villainy, take Pride and Comforts at their Deaths in it, so far were they from repenting or expressing the least Sorrow for it, and yet had Absolution publickly after a very unusual manner, which plainly shews what Thoughts their Confessors had of that Matter, for which they died. Blessed God! how amazing is it that any that had ever heard of thee, or thy Nature, or Properties, especially that had ever look'd into those Revelations thou hast made thereof in thy Written Word, should call the Assassinating the best of Princes, and involving his Subjects in Blood, Destruction of the best Church, and

and the over-turning the best constituted Government in the World, the Murdering their King in cold Blood, and which must have been a consequence the Butchering of many Thousands of their innocent Fellow-Subjects, the making all that surviv'd Slaves to *France* and *Rome*, subjecting both their Bodies and Minds to the worst of Tyrannies; How amazing, I say, is it that any should call these the Causes of God, Religion, and the Laws! as if the Blood of Kings shed by their own Subjects was an acceptable Offering to God; as if Religion were promoted by forcing us into the Communion of such a Church as will lock up the Scripture from us; teach us to believe without Reason, to Pray without Understanding, and give the Worship of God to his Creatures; as if our Laws would be safe in the hands of such a Guardian, who Tyrannizes Arbitrarily over his own Subjects, and would have had the pretence of Conquest to use us worse if possible: If these are the Cause of God and Religion, I know no such thing as the Works of the Devil, and what we renounc'd as such in our Baptism was a meer *Chimera*.

This shews how much the Interest of a Party, when a Man's throughly embark'd, can blind his Reason as well as harden his Conscience, how dangerous it is to engage at all in a Faction, since a Man knows not where he shall stop when he is once in, how by steps he is lead to call Evil Good, and Good Evil, and practice accordingly, and to make the measures of both the serviceableness or diserviceableness of any Action to the Party, and how careful every one that has any regard for his Soul should be, when he chooses out for the directors of his Conscience, and intrusts with the Conduct of it.

But to return, after all this, I say 'twould be but to abuse your Time and Patience to offer at any other proof of the truth and reality of the wicked Design; whoever can call for further Conviction does the least need it; 'tis

no breach of Charity to believe, that none can pretend to doubt of it but such as know it too well.

Let us then briefly see, what the Design was, and as to that, examine the same Particulars which we did in *Israel*'s case, who were engaged in it, what they intended against us, how near they were to effect it, and how strangely we escap'd it?

Our Enemies, like theirs, were such *whose Wrath was kindled against us.* Nothing under God has or does so much obstruct the aspiring and wicked Designs of our Neighbour on the other side of the Water, as this Nation and Church; nothing can satisfie the Pride and Ambition of that Prince less than an universal Monarchy, and no Methods does he stick at, how base and ungrateful, how fraudulent and treacherous, how violent and cruel soever, that may promote his great end, no ties of Honour and Conscience, no Obligations of Justice or Mercy, no Treaties or Leagues, neither Word nor Oath can hold him, but he breaks through them with as much ease as *Sampson* did *the Withs that bound him, which were as a Thread of Tow when it toucheth the Fire.* But while he makes War and disturbance every where, that he may have quiet within, that if at any time the Wounds he gives his Neighbours should touch his own Conscience, his Parasitical Priests may pour in their Oil, and speak Peace to him; he, at their instigation and direction, must attone for these Barbarities by committing others; (as 'tis no new thing for those Confessors to enjoin for a Penance the repetition of those Crimes which have been acknowledged in Confession) the Ambition of the universal Monarch may be serv'd, if at the same time care be taken to satisfie the Pride of the œcumenical Bishop; and let him use the most wicked and cruel Methods to enlarge his Dominions, and bring Countries under his Tyranny, they shall be forgiven him, if he will do so meritorious an act as to put the same Methods

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in practice to extend the Papal Yoke, and bring Hereticks into the Bosom of the Catholick Church.

And what he has done in order to both these ends, is too notorious to need my insisting upon it, and does sufficiently demonstrate how violent and impetuous those Designs are, which are suggested by Ambition and false Zeal; and how eagerly such pursue them as are spurr'd on by their own Pride, encourag'd by the blandishments, or driven with the lash of a Confessor; and what Indignation then may we imagine will such conceive against all those that are obstacles in their way, break their Measures and defeat their Designs?

Time was when *England* was in the Interests of *France*, giving her helping hand to the enslaving the Nations of *Europe*, and her self among the rest; and not many Years since our *Romish* Adversaries had a prospect likewise (at least as they flatter'd themselves) to have establish'd their Antichristian Religion here; and indeed, had that unhappy Alliance continued, had this Nation assisted them, or but stood neuter till now, in all probability before this time the Shackles, the wooden Shooes had been on, the Ears of *Europe* had been bored; and had they succeeded in their Attempts upon this Church, and by Fraud or Violence destroyed her, the great Bulwork of Protestancy would have been gone, and the *Northern Hercules*, as they please to call it, laid open to be torn up by the Roots.

But this Kingdom has broke with *France*, and joined with the other Princes of Christendom, in defending their common Liberties and Rights, and opposing that torrent that was over-whelming them all; and we may say, without Vanity in our selves, or Injustice to others, that our Forces in conjunction with theirs, have stem'd the Tide, and that the weight of them has turn'd the Ballance; and that just Zeal, that Strength and Courage wherewith the Fathers and Sons of this Church encountred the daring

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Attempts of the Priests of the *Romish* Communion in the last Reign, have given such a foil to that Church, have so baffled their Cause, exposed the Weakness, as well as Wickedness of it, that it must lie dead as long as the Trophies of their Victory remain, nor can revive till their Enemies can have an opportunity of treating their Books as they would their Persons, committing both to the Flames, which indeed is the quickest and surest way of stopping the Mouths of Hereticks, and confuting their Writings: No wonder therefore if they look upon us as their worst Adversaries, who have given such a check to the careers of that Monarch, and the designs of that Church, and have all the Malice and Rage against us, that disappointment in their greatest hopes can suggest.

But this is not all, we have a Prince who does not more oppose the Ambition of that Monarch by his Arms, than he eclipses his Glory by his Personal Character, while He bravely leads his own Troops, and exposes Himself in the hottest Action, and gallantly faces Death in a thousand Shapes: How does He reproach that undue tenderness and over care which the other has for his Person, who never ventures it within the reach of Danger, or sight of an Enemy; and while One maintains the glorious Character of a Father of his own Country, and a Friend and Patron to the Neighbouring ones, how little doth it make the Other's Figure, who is a Terror to his Subjects, an Oppressor of his Neighbours, dreaded at Home, and hated Abroad?

'Tis not strange then if the *Wrath* of Enemies, to whom we have given so great and insupportable Provocations, be *kindled against us*, and ready to break forth with the greatest Violence, even to the consuming of us, if their Power be equal to it: And so indeed it had like to have done.

For the miſchief they intended, and were ready to execute, was no leſs than the Murdering our King, and the invading the Kingdom in the diſtraction that that ſad occaſion would have put us in; 'Tis more than probable that that cautious Monarch who never had the Courage to meet his glorious Enemy in the Field, laid, or was privy to the Deſign of taking him off after ſuch a baſe and barbarous manner: The dying Criminals that were ſo careful to clear many others from being acceſſary to it, ſay nothing to acquit him, and indeed it is not to be imagined that men would of their own heads have engaged in ſo black and hazardous an Enterprize; for which if they had ſucceeded in it he muſt have ſacrificed them to his honour he would have been bound in Prudence and Policy to have waſh'd his hands of the blood of the Murdered King in theirs that ſhed it, 'tis not, I ſay, to be believed, that any would have engaged in ſuch an undertaking upon ſuch terms unleſs they had ſome previous aſſurance from him that could give it them, not only of impunity but reward; And if he had not deſign'd the Aſſaſſination, as a Preliminary, not only expedient for the facilitating his intended Invaſion, but indeed as abſolutely neceſſary in order to the ſucceſs of it, why upon the diſcovery and prevention of that has he deſiſted from this? However that were, a competent number of hardned Villains (much ſuch a number as bound themſelves with an Oath to kill St. *Paul*) were ready for the deſign, Horſes and Arms provided, and the place pitch'd upon, each had their Poſt aſſign'd them, and they waited for nothing but an account of the King's going abroad to put it in Execution. If the blow had been given, what a ſurprize, what a conſternation would this Kingdom have been in; if our Shepherd had been Smitten how ſhould we have been Scattered like a flock of ſilly helpleſs Sheep? our head would have been gone, and our hearts failed us, we ſhould have had neither Counſel nor Courage to have oppoſed thoſe Forces that were at that time to

Land upon us, but muſt have fallen an eaſy pray to them. Reflect a little my Brethren, (if you dare) what would have been the dreadful conſequences if this deſign had taken effect. One cannot without horror think upon a French Army, waſting our country, burning our Towns and Houſes, butchering our Friends and Relations; what comfort could any one have taken that ſhould have eſcaped with his Life, to ſee a plentiful Country turned into a barren Wilderneſs, a free People that had many valuable rights made Slaves and dependants upon the Arbitrary Will of a Tyrannical Conquerour; a pure Religion extirpated, and Idolatry and Superſtition ſet up in the room of it?

This muſt have been the miſerable condition in which we ſhould all have been involved: If any think they ſhould have fared better than their Neighbours upon the account of their own great Merits or the fair promiſes they may have had from abroad, they have very wrong notions of Popiſh Gratitude, and French Truſt. Alas Papiſts have engroſs'd all merit, there is no ſuch thing in Proteſtants, and Promiſes made to the prejudice of the great Monarch, or Holy Church, are not to be kept. All they could have hoped for, is, that if they would have gone ſome few ſteps further, and turn'd their Religion, they might poſſibly have been treated as the new Converts are in *France*, but otherwiſe all the mercy to have been expected would have been this, to have been eaten laſt, though it has not always been ſo, inſtances are not wanting where thoſe Proteſtants that have been moſt zealous and forward in ſetting up a Popiſh Prince have been the firſt that had cauſe to repent of it.

In ſhort, whatever is dear to us as men, Engliſh Men, and Proteſtants, muſt have been wreſted from us, 'tis not to be ſuppoſed that being driven on by Rage and Revenge, as well as Avarice and Ambition, they ſhould have uſed ſofter methods here than they do in their other Conqueſts, where they tinge the Rivers with Blood, where Sword

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and Fire devour all before them, and if they would but totally extirpate the rational Inhabitants of the Country, and leave none but the four footed ones of the Field and Foreſt, the Beaſts of burthen, the Beaſts of prey they would make very proper Subjects for ſuch a Government.

But though God ſuffered them to go ſo far as they did in their Helliſh Enterprize, that the proof of it might be clear beyond denial, or doubt, yet was he pleas'd ſo ſeaſonably to diſcover and defeat it, that the miſchief fall only on their heads that deviſed it, and we may ſay with *Iſrael, he has not given us as a prey to their teeth, our Soul is eſcaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler, the Snare is broken, and we are eſcaped:* with them let us alſo join in making ſuch grateful returns to the Divine Goodneſs as the great Mercy calls for.

1. Let us look up to God as the Author of it: I do acknowledge it is not always ſafe or eaſy to determine what events are to be aſcribed to God's ſpecial efficacious Providence, and as the Lords doing, and what are not; yet in ſome there are ſuch viſible marks of Diſcrimination, that a Man muſt be willfully blind if he does not diſtinguiſh them. I may not at preſent enter upon this Argument, and ſhall only ſay that in occurrances which are brought about unexpectedly, but ſeaſonably for the deliverance of good of a Church, or Nation, profeſſing God's true Religion, without their privity or aſſiſtance, by inviſible, or incompetent means, or by the Miniſtry or Inſtrumentality of ſuch things as are only, or immediately under the direction and government of God, in ſuch caſes not to trace the out-goings of the Almighty, where his footſteps are ſo plain, is to be more ſtupid, or Atheiſtical than the very Heathens. *Pſ.* 126. 2. *Exod.* 14. 25.

In our deliverance I will remark but two things which muſt lead us to God as the Author of it: The deſign againſt the King's Life was prevented only by the diſcovery voluntarily made by ſome of thoſe who were to be concern'd

in the execution of it; and the Invasion or Descent upon us was hindred by our Fleets being in such a readiness to guard our own Coasts and block up our Enemies in their Harbours.

But to what shall we ascribe all this, was it through our Policy or Conduct that we had such a Fleet at home? Were they not to have been gone long before to the *Streights* and stopt only by a contrary strange Wind which has hardly been known at that Season of the Year to sit so long in that quarter? And to whom shall we attribute this, but to him *whom the Wind and Seas obey, who brings the Winds out of his Treasures*, and makes them *blow under Heaven whither he lists?*

And what was it that made the discoverers confess the designed Assassination, when 'twas so near being Executed. were they not Papists, who are not generally over-tender of the Blood and lives of Hereticks, when their destruction may promote the good of Holy Church, were they not engaged and encouraged in it by some of their Priests, and no doubt assured if they lost their lives in the attempt, of Eternal Life in Exchange; and how came the Christian, the Gentleman, the Man to be too hard for the Papists, Conscience, Honour, or Pity to be too strong for their Religion, what, or who touch'd their hearts, and melted them into remorse and Confession? Who but he who only knows, and alone can change the heart, take away the heart of stone, and give one of flesh? Him therefore let us acknowledge to be our Saviour and Deliverer, and say *if the Lord himself had not been on our side when men rose up against us they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us.*

2. To him let us in the second place pay the tribute of praise and thanks for it, this is what he expects, *call upon me in the day of trouble and I will hear thee and thou shalt praise me.* And very reasonable certainly, for any benefit bestowed brings the person that receives it into debt to his

 Benefactor,

Benefactor, and thanks is the leaſt part of payment if God has reſcued us from the very Jaws of Death how ought we to glorify him both in Soul and Body which he has redeemed. How ſhould we excite all the powers of our Soul and Members of our Bodies to join in his praiſe? *Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name who ſaveth thy life from deſtruction and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindneſs. Awake alſo my Glory, my tongue ſhall ſpeak of thy righteouſneſs, O Lord, and my Lips ſhall praiſe thee.*

Has he preſerved to us our Churches where we may have liberty to worſhip him in Purity and the beauty of Holineſs; has he ſecured to us thoſe *ſwept and garniſht Houſes from the return of the evil ſpirit, and ſhall not the Tribes go up thither to worſhip, to give thanks to his holy name?* Has he continued to us a ſervice in our own Language, and ſhall we not join in it when we may *ſing with the Spirit, and with the underſtanding alſo; and can ſay* Amen *at the giving of thanks?* Have we ſtill acceſs to him through the Mediation and Interceſſion of our *great High Prieſt* only, and ſhall we not *through him offer to God the Sacrifice of praiſe continually?* May we ſtill partake of the Wine as well as Bread in the Euchariſt, and ſhall we *not receive the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord?* Is *Jeruſalem* ſafe notwithſtanding her Enemies *cry'd down with her, down with her, even to the ground, and may our Feet ſtand in her Gates*; may we yet frequent her ſolemn Aſſembly, and praiſe the Lord of Heaven with Muſick Vocal and Inſtrumental? and ſhall we be ſilent? If any thing ſtrikes us dumb but wonder and aſtoniſhment at the greatneſs and ſtrangeneſs of our Salvation, we ſhall deſerve to continue ſo, and that *our tongues ſhould cleave to the roof of our mouths*; 'tis fit the neglected *Harps ſhould be hung'd for ever upon the Willows*, and the skilful *hand* that toucht them *forget its cunning*, if they make not *a chearful noiſe to the God of* Jacob upon ſo Joyful an occaſion;

caſion; and *if we prefer not* Jeruſalem *above our chief Joy*, and join not *in one of the Songs of Zion* for her deliverance in the Temple of God, how deſervedly may God give her up to the will of our Enemies, ſuffer them to carry us away Captive, and tauntingly *require of us in a ſtrange Land, a Song and Melody in our heavineſs.*

My Brethren, this is the buſineſs for which Authority has this Day call'd us together, and who ever can willfully diſobey that call, and without very juſt reaſon refuſe to come up with *the multitude to the Houſe of God, with the Voice of Joy and Praiſe, with the Multitude that keep Holy-day*, they give but juſt cauſe of ſuſpicion that they were Well-wiſhers to the Villainous Deſign, and are ſorry 'tis defeated. I am very glad to ſee ſuch a numerous appearance in this place, and hope that better Principles than Formality or Curioſity, or fear of Cenſure; that a true ſence of the never to be forgotten Mercy, and hearty deſire to expreſs your thankfulneſs to the gracious Author of it, has brought you together. And oh! that I could ſay any thing to increaſe that ſence in you, and to enlarge your Hearts, and raiſe up your Souls to the higheſt pitch of Gratitude and Devotion.

Aſſure your ſelves, if the greatneſs of the deſtruction which threatned, and was within few days of over-taking us, if the wonderfulneſs of our deliverance, who are *eſcaped as a Bird that was taken in the Snare*, if the viſible appearance of the hand of God in our reſcue, who ſaw the Snares and Deſigns our Enemies were privily laying, while we were ſecure and unapprehenſive of them, and diſcover'd and broke them before they could take effect; if theſe are any motives of thankfulneſs, they have their full ſtrength and force upon us in the preſent caſe: All that is valuable to us, as appertaining either to this Life or Godlineſs, our Lives, with all the Comforts of them, our Liberties, our Eſtates, our Friends, and which, I hope, we eſteem above all, our Reformed Religion, were all upon

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the very brink of ruine: The Blow was near being given, and we knew nothing of it, ſo far were we from being able to have warded it of, which muſt either have Murdered us preſently, or if any had ſurvived it for ſome time they muſt have lived Slaves, and then died with the miſerable proſpect of leaving their wretched Poſterity ſuch; fetter'd both in Body and Mind, under Temporal and Spiritual Chains, and nothing has prevented this Blow, or ſaved us from this ruine, but a merciful and watchful Providence: Let us then ſay in the words of our Royal Prophet, *Bleſſed be the Lord God, the God of* Iſrael, *who only, doth wondrous things, and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole Earth be filled with his glory,* Amen. Amen.

3. But laſtly, to conclude, let us repoſe our Truſt and Confidence in this God for the future, and ſay with *Iſrael our help ſtandeth in the name of the Lord who made Heaven and Earth:* 'Tis certain this Church and Nation have been for ſome time preſerved in that peaceable and happy ſtate we enjoy by little leſs than Miracle; God has as plainly appeared for us as he did of old for his People whom he brought out of *Ægypt with a mighty hand*; but yet as they were queſtioning his power even in the midſt of Miracles, and diſtruſting his goodneſs at the ſame time that they had preſent Experience of it *(He ſmote the ſtony Rock indeed, but can he give bread,* &c.) Thoſe mouths which ſhould have been opened only in his praiſe, were filled with nothing but murmurings and diffidence; ſo has it been with too many among us, complainings and repineings, doubts and deſpair almoſt have been heard in our ſtreets, and how juſtly might God have verifyed our unreaſonable and unthankful fears? When St. *Peter* at his own requeſt was commanded by Chriſt to come unto him upon the Water, he walked ſafely upon the ſurface of it while his Faith boy'd him up, but when at the raging of the Winds his Faith began to ſhake, and he was afraid, as if Chriſt who he ſaw at that time *Commanded the Seas*

and

and they obey'd, could not govern the Winds too, and ſecure him againſt both; how reaſonably did Chriſt chaſtiſe his deſpondency and want of Faith by letting him begin to ſink? And ſo might God have dealt with us, withdrawn his Protection from us, and ſuffered the Waters to have over-whelmed us, when we had ſo unworthily diſtruſted his Power and Readineſs to Rule the raging of them, after he had ſo often forced them within their Banks, and for our ſakes ſaid to them, *hitherto ſhall you come, and no further?* But he has rather choſe to upbraid than correct us for our repining and doubting, and to bring us to our duty of an humble affiance and truſt in him, by giving freſh inſtances of his Power and Goodneſs, than puniſh our neglect of it by withdrawing them from us: How ſhould this even ſhame us out of our infidelty (I can call it no better) and give us a holy Confidence in him, and Dependance upon him; that he who has ſo often and ſtrangely appeared for us, will be our God and Guide for ever; that he *who has deliver'd us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver, will yet deliver us*; and perfect in his time that good work which he has begun, and carried on ſo far for us.

But then in order to this truſt and relyance, that they may be reaſonable and well grounded, we cann't but think there is ſomething to be done by us, and what is that but to endeavour to walk worthy of that goodneſs which God has ſhew'd to us, by improving the mercy, he continues to us to his Glory, and by making him the returns of a filial fear, unfeigned Love, and an univerſal Obedience? without this our Faith will be but a vain Confidence, and meer Preſumption.

We have the beſt Government and Laws in the World, but if we are looſe and lawleſs in our Lives, the advantage of our Conſtitution will be ſo far from availing us, that contrariwiſe it will make a conſiderable Article in the charge againſt us; it will both haſten our account and make it the more heavy.

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We have a Prince to go in and out before us, to Rule us at home and Fight for us abroad who does at leaſt come up to the Character of any that have ſate upon this, or any other Throne before him; but if we do not approve our ſelves good Subjects of the King of Heaven, our Princes Virtues will not ſecure us, though our wickedneſs may injure him: The Spirit of God has told us, that *for the Sins of a Nation many are the Princes thereof.* God may as well take away a good one as give a bad King *in his wrath*, and we know he once threatned a People, that if they *did wickedly they ſhould be deſtroyed, both they and their King.*

We have a pure Religion a Church reformed from the corruptions of that of *Rome*, but if our Converſations are impure and we are unreform'd in our manners, will our Church, or our Faith ſave us? God will indeed have a Church to the end of the World, and *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt her*, but ſure he is not tied to this, or that particular Place, or Country, the Goſpel may be taken from one Kingdom and yet not out of the World, but tranſplanted to another, and our Saviour has plainly enough told us upon what terms he will give, or take it away from a People in thoſe words to the Jews, the *Kingdom of Heaven ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation that ſhall bring forth the Fruits thereof.*

Would we therefore that God ſhould go on to preſerve and ſecure theſe bleſſings to us, and that we may raiſe to our ſelves a ground and confidence in him that he will, we ſee how we muſt qualify our ſelves for them, we muſt not be barren and unfruitful under all the Cultivations and Husbandry, all the gracious methods which he uſes to improve us, but muſt *bring forth Fruits meet for repentance, the bleſſed Fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance.* Being thus diſpoſed we may reaſonably hope for God's Bleſſing upon our endeavours; 'tis true our endeavours without the divine aſſiſtance will turn to little account, and

'Tis certain God can if he pleaſes, ſave us without our contributing any thing towards it; but yet, though God may, and does ſometimes for weighty reaſons act either immediately, at leaſt without the miniſtry of them, for whoſe ſake he acts and after a very extraordinary manner, yet where there is no ſpecial promiſe, 'tis not to be expected that God ſhould go out of his ordinary methods of his Providence, which is to act by the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes to cooperate with the honeſt endeavours of Men, when there is room for them, and make that ſucceſsful for their ſupport, or preſervation: And therefore as no ſucceſs is to be expected from our endeavours without the divine aſſiſtance, ſo that aſſiſtance cannot reaſonably be expected without the uſe of our endeavours.

The Husbandman would be thought very wild and extravagant in his expectation that ſhould think to reap a plentiful Crop without manuring and tilling his ground, preparing it for and committing the ſeed to it in due manner and ſeaſon, and yet 'tis certain 'tis *God only that can give the increaſe. The Watchman undoubtedly waketh but in vain unleſs the Lord keep the City*, but yet if a Town beleagur'd by an Enemy ſhould neglect to Man their Forts, and guard their Avenues, and inſtead of unanimouſly joining together to defend themſelves and oppoſe the Foe, ſhould quarrel among themſelves and fall a tearing and devouring one another, it would not be hard to gueſs what would be the fate of it. I ſay, our endeavours muſt not be wanting towards our own ſafety, though 'tis only God's Bleſſing upon them that can make them ſucceſsful for that end. That therefore we may expect and receive that bleſſing, let us do our parts, purſue thoſe methods that tend moſt plainly to the ſecuring them, and truſt God with the event.

Nothing under Heaven but Union and Reſolution can ſecure us; if we are broken into Factions, and purſuing the intereſt of Parties, or private Revenge, while the Enemy

my is watching for the ruine of the whole. We may learn from our Saviour what is like to become of us, *A Kingdom divided against it self cannot ſtand.*

If now the Adverſary has ſhew'd himſelf ſo openly and daringly, we ſhall be Cowardly, or to put it into other words, cautious and reſerved; we invite and encourage his attempts upon us. This is no time to diſſemble, we muſt declare plainly one way or other; either reſolve upon a brave Defence, or to yield our Necks to the Yoke.

My Brethren we want no Engagements or Encouragements to unite and to be bold.

The cauſe we are to unite in, is the Cauſe of our King and Country, and indeed of all *Europe*; 'tis the Cauſe of our Church and the whole Proteſtant Religion.

We are not left alone to grapple with our Enemies, we have moſt of the Princes and States of Chriſtendom join'd with us; and which is moſt encouraging of all, hitherto God has appeared for us: Let us then join as one Man, both Heart and Hand, in defence of our ſelves, our little ones, and all our Subſtance (as *Ezra* expreſſes it) in defence of our Liberties, our Laws and Religion; and for the ſake of theſe in defence of our King and Government, upon whom, under God, all theſe depend. We have all the ſtricteſt Obligations to him that can be laid upon us, of Gratitude, of Duty, of Intereſt.

Shall we not unite in the defence of him that has once reſcued us out of the very Jaws of Deſtruction, and is ſtill guarding us with the utmoſt hazards and fatigue, in defence of that Precious Life which has been ſo often expoſed for the ſecurity of ours?

Have we not ſworn many of us, to bear Faith and true Allegiance to him, and do we not all every day beg of God, in our publick Prayers, to ſtrengthen him that he may Vanquiſh and Overcome all his Enemies; and ought we not to convince the World that we have not in our Oaths prevaricated with God as well as impoſed upon Man;

upon such an occasion, and to second our Prayers with our hearty endeavours? Are we not Embarkt in one Cause, have we not the same common concern with him, both Civil and Religious? So that to join in his Defence, is indeed to join in our own: why then should we not resolve to stand by him and one another, with the same Courage with which he Fights for us all?

To conclude, Let us first seek and engage the Divine Favour and Blessing, and then add our joint Endeavours, as our Places and Capacities give us opportunity, for our common Security; and being reconciled to God by Repentance and newness of Life, and united to one another by all the Bonds which our common Relation and Interests, as to Nature, Country, and Religion obliges us; and resolve to act in good earnest for the benefit and safety of the whole, we may confidently rely upon God, that he will prosper and give success to our Endeavours, that he will guard us at home, *and go forth with our Fleets and Armies, and fight our Battles abroad, that he will preserve the breath of our Nostrils; bless him in his going out and coming in, give his Angels charge over him, and cover his head in the day of Battel: that he will be a Sun and a Shield to enlighten and protect him, to keep him from the Arrow that flyeth by day, and the evil that walketh in darkness; that he will bring him back with Honour and Victory, and Crown at last all his Labours and our Wishes with a happy and durable Peace: and that our Enemies being scatter'd, who delighted in blood, we being delivered from their hands, may serve him without fear, in holyness and righteousness, before him, all the days of our Life.*

FINIS.

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